

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 671

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK PRIORITY

INFO USIA WASHDC

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: FRENCH MEDIA COMMENT ON NIXON- POMPIDOU MEETING IN
ICELAND

REYKJAVIK FOR AMBASSADOR IRWIN

1. SUMMARY: REYKJAVIK MEETING AND U. S.- FRENCH RELATIONS ARE MAJOR
FOCUS EDITORIAL COMMENT IN FRENCH MEDIA ON EVE NIXON- POMPIDOU
'SUMMIT'. COMMERCIAL AND MONETARY PROBLEMS ARE SEEN BY ALL
COMMENTATORS AS NUB OF FRENCH- AMERICAN DIFFERENCES. COMMON THEMES
MOST STORIES WERE: (1) GREAT DISTANCE SEPARATING U. S. AND FRANCE
ON MOST KEY ISSUES DESPITE CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO PRES-
IDENTS; (2) ICELAND WILL BE A CHILLIER AZORES WITH SIGNIFICANT
SIMILARITIES AND SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES; (3) REFERENCE IS
MADE TO WATERGATE IN MANY COMMENTARIES, BUT ASSESSMENT ITS
EFFECT ON SUMMIT AND U. S.- FRENCH RELATIONS VARY WIDELY.
SEVERAL COMMENTARIES CLOSELY REFLECT FAMILIAR GOF POSITIONS AND
WERE PROBABLY INSPIRED BY MAY 28 ELYSEE PRESS BACKGROUNDER.

2. COMMERCIAL AND MONETARY PROBLEMS ARE SEEN BY ALMOST ALL
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COMMENTATORS AS NUB OF FRANCO- AMERICAN DIFFERENCES. ACCORDING
TO TELEVISION FIRST NETWORK (5/29) " THE QUESTION IS: SHALL WE
HAVE A TRADE WAR OR SHALL WE LEARN TO LIVE TOGETHER? FOR WASHING-
TON, ONE OBJECTIVE: TO EXTORT FROM EUROPE ADVANTAGEOUS COMMERCIAL

CONCESSIONS. FOR POMPIDOU, EUROPE WOULD CEASE TO EXIST IF SUCH WERE THE CASE. FRANCE IS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE BUT ON A BASIS OF RECIPROCITY. EUROPE HAS CONSISTENTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORLD TRADE. AMERICAN FARM EXPORTS TO THE COMMON MARKET HAVE GONE UP 42 PER CENT OVER THE PAST 7 YEARS. AND WHAT WOULD TRADE CONCESSIONS BE WORTH IF WASHINGTON STILL HAD THE POSSIBILITY TO DEVALUE THE DOLLAR OVERNIGHT? A NEW MONETARY SYSTEM IS THUS A PRE- CONDITION". MAURICE DELARUE IN LEM MONE (5/30) WROTE THAT THE " AMERICAN FOREIGN TRADE DEFICIT IS NOT DUE TO EUROPE AND DOES NOT EVEN HAVE A COMMERCIAL ORIGINMMMMTHE CAUSE OF THE U. S. BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT MUST BE SOUGHT ELSEWHERE, IN ILL- CONSIDERED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ACTIONS AND EXPENDITURES. FOR MR. POMPIDOU, IT THUS FALLS PRIMARILY TO THE AMERICANS THEMSELVES TO REMEDY THIS SITUATION.... THE EUROPEANS MUST NOT FOR ALL THAT BE OPPOSED TO LIBERALIZING TRADE, PROVIDED THAT ALL TRADE BARRIERS AND PRODUCTS OF ALL KINDS--- INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL-- ARE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION AND ABOVE ALL THAT CONCESSIONS ARE MUTUAL. YET SUCH CONCESSIONS WON' T MEAN ANYTHING UNLESS AN HONEST MONETARY SYSTEM BASED ON A CONVERTIBLE, STABLE CURRENCY SECURE FROM ANY NATIONAL MANIIPULATION IS RESTORED. IN OTHER WORDS, THE NEW MONETARY SYSTEM MUST TAKE EFFECT, NOT PRIOR TO THE NEGOTIATION, BUT PRIOR TO THE APPLICATION OF A NEW TRADE ACCORD... PRIORITY TO COMMERCIAL CONCESSIONS FAVORING THE AMERICANS OR PRIORITY TO THE RESTURATION OF A FAIR MONETARY SYSTEM? THIS IS THE QUESTION". ACCORDING TO SERGE MAFFERT (FRANCE- SOIR, 5/29) " MR. NIXON INTENDS TO ASK THE EUROPEANS TO MAKE COMMERCIAL-- AND THUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL-- SACRIFICES WHICH WILL JEOPARDIZE THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE. WHILE THE COMMERCIAL ASPECT, AS AN INSTRUMENT OF U. S. ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POWER, IS FOREMOST FOR THE UNITED STATES, FOR MR. POMPIDOU, IT IS THE MONETARY ASPECT THAT HAS PRIORITY. IN HIS EYES THE COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS ARE SECONDARY, BUT THE MONETARY PROBLEM IS VITAL BECAUSE IT DETERMINES THE WORTH AND REALITY OF ANY COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT, AND BECAUSE IT IS THE TOUCH- STONE OF EUROPEAN COHESION AND OF AMERICA' S REAL CHOICES. IT IS PROBABLY ON MONETARY POLICY THAT THE TWO PRESIDENTS WILL HAVE THE HARDEST CONFRONTATION."

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3. SECURITY MATTERS ARE ACCORDED RELATIVELY MODEST ATTENTION IN MOST PRE- SUMMIT COMMENTARIES. " THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS NOT UNAWARE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF DISARMAMENT" WROTE MAURICE DELARUE (LE MONDE, 5/30) " BUT IT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT REAL DISARMAMENT CAN RESULT FROM AGREEMENTS ON PAPER BETWEEN SUPERPOWERS. DISARMAMENT, IN ITS OPINION, CAN ONLY RESULT FROM A LONG PRACTICE OF DETENTE... MR. POMPIDOU, WHILE FAVORING THE DETENTE WITH MOSCO IS IN NO WAY SEEKING IT AS SUBSTITUTE FOR THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE... OTHER EUROPEANS AND THE JAPANESE CAN DOUBTLESS INCREASE THEIR DEFENSE CONTRIBUTIONS... FRANCE IN ANY CASE IS NOT CONCERNED: SHE NOT ONLY DOES NOT BELONG TO THEALLIED MILITARY ORGANIZATION (EXCEPT FOR SPECIFIC OPERATIONS FOR WHICH SHE CONTRIBUTES), BUT SHE IS

MAINTAINING FORCES IN GERMANY WITHOUT DEMANDING ANY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION FROM THE BONN GOVERNMENT AS THE AMERICANS AND BRITISH DO."

4. FOR SEVERAL COOMMENTATORS THE DECEMBER 1971 AZORES MEETING IS A CONVENIENT POINT OF REFERENCE. MAURICE DELARUE IN LE MONDE (5/30) WROTE THAT " REYKJAVIK IS SOMEHOW A ' RE- MAKE', AN IMITATION, A COPY" OF THE AZORES BUT NOTED THAT " THE WORLD HAS CHANGED" AND " THE TWO PRESIDENTS HAVE SUFFERED THE WEAR AND TEAR OF POWER IN THE MEANTIME. BUT NOW AS THEN" , DELARUE ADDS, " MONETARY DISTURBANCES AND TRADE IMBALANCES ARE THE MAIN CONCERN OF THE WEST... EXCEPT FOR A FEW ADJECTIVES AND PRECISIONS, THE AZORES COMMUNIQUE OF DECEMBER 13, 1971 COULD BE USED IN REYKJAVIK." FOR FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER MAURICE SCHUMANN, WRITING IN FRANCE- SOIR (5/29) " THE AMERICA THAT POMPIDOU WILL BE DEALING WITH IN ICELAND IS " NO LONGER THAT OF THE AZORES"" THE UNITED STATES IS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING THAT EVEN A GREAT POWER-- WHATEVER ITS NUCLEAR MEANS OR SPACE FEATS-- CANNOT BOTH ASSUME WORLD- WIDE RESPONSIBILITIES, AS KISSINGER STILL CLAIMED RECENTLY, AND SUBSTITUTE THE MYTH OF THE MELTING CURRENCY FOR THE INTANGIBILITY OF THE DOLLAR." HUMANITE ON MAY 30 WROTE, " THE REYKJAVIK SUMMIT WILL ONLY CONTINUE THE HAGGLING ENGAGED IN AT THE AZORES." TELEVISION' S FIRST NETWORK NEWS OBSERVED (5/29) THAT " THE COMING SUMMIT WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN THE ONE IN THE AZORES. THE STAKES ARE BIGGER AND MORE FAR- REACHING."

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
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AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK PRIORITY
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5. MANY COMMENTATORS REFER TO THE CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS. " MR. POMPIDOU GETS ON BETTER WITH MR. NIXON

THAN WITH THE UNITED STATES," WROTE MAURICE DELARUE IN LE MONDE (5/30)...." " AND AT A TIME WHEN... SPECTACULAR RAPPROCHEMENTS OPEN ENTIRELY NEW PROSPECTS FOR THE WORLD, WOULD IT BE WISE FOR THE TWO COUNTRIES, WHICH AS MR. NIXON OFTEN RECALLS ARE THE OLDEST ALLIES, TO BECOME EMMESHED IN FAMILY FEUDS?" ON A MORE NEGATIVE NOTE, RICHARD LISOIA IN COMBAT (5/29) WROTE THAT " DESPITE THEIR MUTUAL LIKING THE TWO CHIEFS OF STATE CAN ONLY MAKE MINOR CONCESSIONS TO EACH OTHER ON POLITICAL, COMMERCIAL AND MONETARY PROBLEMS."

6. MOST COMMENTATORS MAKE SOME REFERENCE TO PRESIDENT NIXON' S DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES. THE U. S. CORRESPONDENT OF TELEVISION' S SECOND NETWORK REPORTED: " THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION IS OVERCOMING THE WATERGATE SCANDAL. FOR WASHINGTON, EUROPE, A COMMERCIAL RIVAL, MUST PAY FOR AMERICAN PROTECTION. NIXON IS DETERMINED TO MAKE THE MOST OF HIS DUET WITH MOSCOW TO PREVENT EUROPE FROM INTERFERING WITH AMERICAN INTERESTS... THE TIME HAS COME TO SMOOTH OUT THE ROUGH EDGES AND FIND A COMPROMISE." DELARUE IN LE MONDE (5/30) STATED THAT " THE U. S. PRESIDENT, WEAKENED DOMESTICALLY BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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THE WATERGATE SCANDAL, WILL WANT TO ASSERT HIS AUTHORITY IN EUROPE, BUT IF HE NEEDS A SUCCESS ABROAD, NEITHER HE NOR MR. POMPIDOU IS INTERESTED IN STARTING A CRISIS THAT WOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO FRANCO- AMERICAN RELATIONS." TELEVISION' S FIRST NETWORK (5/29) OBSERVED THAT " NIXON, WHO IS UNDER ATTACK FROM ALL SIDES, WILL WANT TO APPEASE A HOSTILE CONGRESS." ACCORDING TO COMBAT (5/29) " MR. POMPIDOU TOLD KISSINGER: EUROPE DOES NOT ATTACH MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THE WATERGATE AFFAIR. WE CANNOT IGNORE AMERICA AND IT IS WITH NIXON THAT WE MUST NEGOTIATE." " NIXON WILL BE ALL THE TOUGHER SINCE HIS PRESENT DIFFICULTIES AT HOME MAKE AN INTRANSIGENT ATTITUDE IMPERATIVE FOR HIM", WROTE SERGE MAFFERT (FRANCE- SOIR 5/29), " YET THE WATERGATE AFFAIR ACTUALLY DOES NOT MODIFY FUNDAMENTALLY THE PRESIDENT' S POLICY WHICH HAD BEEN SET AND STATED IN THE BLUNTEST TERMS ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS BEFORE THE CHAIN OF SCANDALS SURFACED." DECON UPON RECEIPT.
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